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ABSTRACT

This paper argues for an educational orientation to American studies in high school that contributes toward individual growth and a sense of compassion toward humanity. According to the author, conventional schooling is a process of training youth to fit into out society by internalizing the accepted behavior and attitudinal norms. The student adjusts to a lock-step process in which he climbs in a predetermined fashion to a predetermined goal of social status and material success. Instead, education should encourage the development of personal growth and the interrelatedness of that growth with the growth of humanity; criticism of current societal values; and the development of values based upon compassion, creativity, and the uniqueness of the individual within his own culture. A suggested course outline with this focus includes four main aspects. First, the course structure must organize the world in such a way as to give direction and clarity to the student's discovery of the values implicit in his culture. Secondly, the course must provide a structural basis for determining the relationships among cultural themes and the implications they have for living in that culture. Thirdly, the course must explain how the student's culture reflects and is involved in the human community. Fourthly, the course must deal with such instances of oppression as colonialism and racism to show that bias can destroy humanity. Also included is an analysis of the author's philosophical opposition to student grading. (Author/DE)

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A MATTER OF COURSE

Becca Livingston

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For John Hague

An Introductory Note

Becca Livingston's "A Matter of Course" is itself evidence supporting its own contentions. The paper argues for an educational orientation and a frame of reference in American Studies in High School that make central individual personal growth and a compassionate sense of the larger human community. And it is just those qualities that Becca Livingston displays as a student, a writer, and a person. When she finished the first draft of the essay in the spring 1973, she was a senior in American Studies at the University of California, Davis. (Next year she will be a graduate student in American Studies at the University of New Mexico.) To borrow her own terminology, she knows as a student how to see "givens" as "takens." She writes by assimilating what she reads into her own vision of things. And her responsiveness as a person, her capacity to see what's up and simultaneously to resist and consent, is a delight. Her argument has four major flaws: (a) She agrees to the subjective/objective bifurcation of the world (internal/ external, self/ world, growth/culture) that lies at the heart of the very cultural order she wishes--by implication, at least--to transform. Her dualism persists in the very language by which she attempts to dissolve it. (b) She has a strong sense of the politics of language (because language is the form in which politics impinges on the self most forcefully?), but she lacks a full sense of the politics necessary to make a world in which such a course as she advocates would be possible on anything more than an ad hoc, tentative scale--at least in the public schools. If we had a world in which the socialization were good, and where what individuals were being socialized into were good (that is, flexible and human), her course might not be necessary. It is exactly because we do not have such a world that her course becomes difficult, perhaps impossible, to institute. (c) She acknowledges in her comments on grading and socialization that what she proposes will be difficult for teachers to do in the specific context of the schools as they are, but she does not take full measure of the difficulty. High School is a hard place to teach well. (d) She is very tentative when it comes to translating theory into practice. She makes only the most sketchy suggestions. Despite these objections, however, she is right. She provides a utopian model by which any high school teacher in American Studies should feel obliged to measure his practical proposals.

Robert Merideth
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6/73

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A MATTER OF COURSE

Becca Livingston

"To create a new university is to take a new look at the universe" (Leonard). I have found that to create a new course is to take a new look at all that is taken as a matter of course.

Preface

I began my project with the idea of preparing to write a high school text book for United States culture studies. I wanted to create an approach to education which would facilitate both the individual's personal growth and a concern with his participation in the larger human community. But I found that many of the assumptions upon which conventional education has been constructed are counter-productive to my ends. Any course for which I might design a text must reformulate basic assumptions as to the purpose and value of both education and reasoning. I found that the language, and world of facts and ideas in and through which education occurs are not neutral. They cooperate in limiting the ways in which we might live in the world. The result of this situation is that most education inculcates and enforces the norms and values inherent in the culture in which it educates.

Education as socialization to the established order is an unavoidably serious roadblock to anyone who is critical of and would change the established order and particularly the kind of interpersonal relationships it fosters. One of the basic assumptions of this paper is that there is much wrong not only with the world we live in but also with the way we live in it; that at best our educational system does little to help us understand and remedy those flows. By designing a text, I wanted to encourage and help students criticize and amend their values, and the institutions which serve them, in the interest of humanity.

But there seemed to be a number of problems in doing so. If previous conventional courses had socialized the high school student to a way of perceiving and reasoning which reinforced, or at best left unquestioned, basic assumptions about human nature and society, then I had the task of formulating a new quality of student with new direction and purpose in the use of his faculties. I soon discovered that a re-socialized student meant a resocialized individual; that, in fact, schools are involved in teaching students (not individuals) and, hence, limiting the meaning of self and of self-interest. Present concepts of self direct the use of and relationship between heart and mind. My central problem and purpose became the creation of a new frame of

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reference for thought processes which did not divorce them from the whole individual or from their service to and implications for the human community.

In developing an argument along these lines, I have not developed an outline for a text, but have proposed some key elements for creating a course. I have, in the last sections, not only discussed in greater detail pedagogical possibilities, but also suggested an analytical structure and some specific readings and projects for the course.

I

The course of study suggested herein is about culture. Culture consists in shared and presumed, established and accepted, realities. Culture binds together a group of people through a common way of organizing and perceiving the world, of giving it meaning and order and of functioning within it. In doing this, cultural subsystems--which include language, institutions, values, beliefs, roles and behavioral norms--form a web of established possibilities which limit how and what people belonging to the culture can ordinarily experience, know, expect and imagine. What a person perceives is partially dependent on culturally specified and predictable experience; on cultural expectations and assumptions about the nature of man and of world; on what is culturally defined as "knowing." Schooling is the organization and transmission to the young of these culturally sanctioned expectations, assumptions, and definitions.

Since the development of curriculum is itself a cultural process, those who wish to recreate my ideas into a class need to be aware of the different sets of assumptions out of which a course, or an educational process, may arise. As in the broader culture, the hidden assumptions of an educational process predispose the situation, and the participants, toward a certain range and type of acting and knowing. (As such, they differ from and are prerequisite to goals, which define what is specifically desired in the outcomes of the educational process within the arena of one course.) My own assumptions and consequent predispositions may be clarified by contrasting them with the implicit biases of conventional schooling.

What is taught and how is it learned in the conventional classroom? McLuhan offers a clue in his phrase "the medium is the message."[1] When this thesis is applied to information in the classroom, the issue to which one is ultimately led is the difference between neutrality and objectivity. Most teaching techniques rest on the assumption that facts and methods of interpretation can be made philosophically neutral and value free. Insisting upon understanding the world
in isolation from the values, beliefs and activities
by which man lives in the world is to create a world
without man: just as evaluating, believing and acting
without knowledge of and reference to the world is to
portray man as existing without world.

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That neither extreme of subjectivity or objectivity is useful or defensible does not deny the notion that evaluation must proceed from a position of non-investment in any one set of values. When the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity is resolved, one then is conscious of continually understanding the world from a particular philosophical stance. Once this is recognized it becomes possible to reject the finality of any one philosophical stance (to reject its claim to objectivity) and to experiment with and evaluate optional world views. To propose that one can be objective is to assert the definitiveness of one's knowledge of, and way of knowing, facts. However, fact must be described; it must be conveyed in language. Language is not neutral, it is conotative as well as denotative. It is through language that we articulate the meeting between our consciousness and that which is other than conscicusness. Words are both product and determinant, both cause and effect, in our cognitive world. They apply both standards of controversy and accepted reality. They provide, at the same time, standards of devience and normalcy. Words enable us to reach out of ourselves and name our surroundings. Because they come from us and not from the world, the names are not neutral: still, they are names for the world, and when they bring environment, history, idea, and event into our cognitive orientation in the form of information or theory, the way they shape the subject connotes to us certain ways of responding to it.

There are many examples of this "politics of language." Scores of tests done in both the field and the laboratory have verified that naming a child a "slow learner" establishes a different set of expectations and role interactions for that child. His teacher's attitude toward and treatment of him is different than it is for a "normal" or "gifted" child. The experimental data demonstrate further that the child achieves in accordance with the levels of expectations.[2]

Our attitude toward ourselves as a group--as "Western Civilization," or as "The American Way of Life"--is in large part maintained and determined by the way we name the historical process. As Stokely Carmichael has pointed out, the words of our history textbooks have rationalized and disguised white, Western imperialism and racism: "Columbus discovered America and American Indians." Human life, world, and progress do not exist until discovered by the white man whose words always imply that he is first and dominant. We define our own righteousness in the process of defining our actions towards another as benevolent. Seldom does one hear of a people in a position of dominance declaring "we have ceased to oppress these people"; rather, they applaud themselves: "We have given them independence."[3]

A third example is elucidated by R. D. Laing's approach to psychology. Though I am simplifying, his argument is that an adequate understanding of the use of such words as "mad" and "maladjusted" requires that they be perceived in their social and cultural setting. The psychiatrist, in some sense, has become the secular high priest of modern society. It is

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his responsibility to help cure the deviant of his psychosis or neurosis and in the process to protect society from deviants. But what is largely ignored is the possibility that the disease is not inside one person, but outside, in a cultural environment that is conducive to neurosis, that is destructive of human mental and emotional health, and that neurosis is not an internal organic ill, but an internal organic reaction to external ills.[4]

The point of these examples in their application to education is this: in the process of learning language the child learns the world--not only what it is, but also its uses and the ways of controlling it sanctioned by and inherent in the language. Most schooling proceeds on an unquestioned faith in the way the world is defined and perceived as accurately representative of a neutral reality. On these assumptions, the study of language is properly defined as the study of correct usage, grammar, and so forth. Even more important are the possibilities that are excluded by these assumptions--the study of language as a cultural system which can reveal ourselves--our assumptions and beliefs. Leo Rosten reveals some of these possibilities in his exploration of the nature of languages in terms of translation:

> Translation does not deal with words but with modalities of evaluation. To translate is to decode--and encode: to convert one pattern of ethos, experience and appraisal into another. No language can be skinned of its history or psychology, stripped of its sociological vectors or philosophical posture. A language packages the mind, heart and soul of those who use it--according to the ways in which they were shaped by it.[5]

Our very notion of language, as portrayed in most language texts, assumes "the way things are," fails to understand the politics of langugae, the way words organize our world for us, the realm of directions and the range of alternatives which a vocabulary presents to us.

Like the study of language, the study of most other conventional subjects--of what questions, concepts and structure they encompass--is considered representative of truth and beyond question. This is implicit in most pre-planned lessons, and particularly in junior and senior high schools and in colleges in the division of the day into periods which are restricted to one discipline and topic. The student is responsible for following the teacher's 50 minute train of thought, and for understanding data as connected and grouped within specific categories of investigation and integration. The student must segment his knowledge, skills, and interests in conformity with divisions which have a lot to do with a long history of specialization and departmentalization, with the way in

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which we have come to oranize our society and divide ourselves, and our thinking, but have little to do with gaining an unfragmented understanding of ourselves, our thinking, our society, or with the perspectives, dreams and accomplishments of creative, integrative, and whole individuals.

The stultifying consequences of this way of perceiving the world are reinforced by the pattern of coventional educational roles which is its logical corollary. This is crucial in that an attitude toward either one's self or one's world is woven of the possibilities we perceive as belonging to each. Attitude is a consideration of what is believed to be a valuable pursuit and way of pursuing, and what is judged as attainable and practical. When the teacher is programmer--controlling time, material, and subject--inevitably, the value of a pursuit or a response becomes associated with price. The most obvious "pay-off" is the grade; but the grade is significant of a deeper lose-gain struggle. Approval of teacher and peer group; self-esteem and confidence; the pain of embarrassment and ridicule. . . are all part of the cash-nexus. The student is in effect not able to respond to the material from his spontaneous and emotional reaction to it, from the unique reference point of his own life and imagination. The teacher's response to the material is also inhibited by the study plan and by the criterion employed in grading. Conventional education is oppressive to both the student's and teacher's humanity and prevents either from appreciating the humanity of the other. Instead, intrinsic notions of what is good for one's self, what one's needs are, are sacrificed to strong external motivational forces, to group consensus, and other extrinsic rewards and measurements.

An attitude towards the relationship of self and world is in part shaped by the interaction we practice in thought and behavior between the subjective and objective. Denying subjective-objective dynamics in the learning process by claiming neutrality in what we teach does not enhance human growth. Humanity unites the world in and through itself and gives meaning and order to that union by exercising its capacity to judge, to value and to believe. Educational neutrality does more than enable teachers to escape responsibility for their material (at the price of alienating them from their material and therefore from the world)--it also excludes the active participation of the student as a human being; it excludes the materials' meaning and the student's purpose. A subject, its data and the values inherent in its presentation are portrayed as outside the arena of basic controversy and doubt when the student's acceptance of them is based on extrinsic authority, whether it be general consensus, one person or textbooks, rather than on his own needs, experiences and experiments. This is no small consideration in an educational process if one looks to its shadow in the larger society. The extent to which we accept conventional ways of dividing and organizing the world; our established notions of human needs and the use of technology in servicing those needs, as "inevitably

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the way things are"--as reality--is the extent to which we deny ourselves control over the values and goals technology is serving and hence over the world it/we is/are creating. The central question is whether an individual can fulfill his potential to be a creative, productive human being as long as he must sacrifice his human potential for growth--his doubts, desires and intuitions--to external forces, and the use of his faculties for developing new and better ways of living to replace the "way things are." A creator must experience himself as the central actor, as being able to refigure and rebuild his world. As long as the end result, or the process of creative work is controlled through an external power (i.e., an answer book or grade), that power controls also the realm of possibilities and the uniqueness of the creative project. The proposal that a creator experience himself as central actor is not synonymous with the infant's experience of himself as the center of the universe. It does not necessitate that the creator act only or primarily in a self-interest alienated from concern for others. The concept of the "central actor" is essentially derived from a concept of freedom and human nature. It refers to Paul Goodman's definition of freedom as "the condition of initiative." If human nature provided no bases for responsibility and initiative, if human nature were infinitely flexible and manipulable, or if it were totally made up of response to environment, there could be no history. Man must be able both to adapt to and to resist adaptation to undesirable conditions in order to have created a human history containing discontinuities in human social and cultural circumstances. Fromm, in his discussion of Nazism, recognizes this seeming duality in man's nature:

> The function of an authoritarian ideology and practice can be compared to the function of neurotic symptoms. Such symptoms result from unbearable psychological conditions and at the same time offer a solution that makes life possible. Yet they are not a solution that leads to happiness or growth of personality. They leave unchanged the conditions that necessitate the neurotic solution. The dynamism of man's nature is an important factor that tends to seek for more satisfying solutions if there is a possibility of attaining them.[6]

What Fromm describes as "the dynamism of man's nature" provides a radically different view of man than the behaviorist perspective which views man as the sum product of his environment. Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, captures the spirit of this distinction:

> the materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating.[7]

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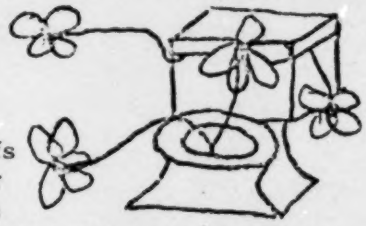
At the same time, the argument for human creativity and novelty is held in tension by the fact that no man is able to know all things in all ways at once. Man is not only limited by his circumstances, but, indeed, lives within the boundaries of human and physical environment. The process of organizing and deriving meaning from life is one of acquiring a set of filters which allow us to eliminate the unimportant, to categorize, generalize and connect what otherwise would remain a formless and infinite mass of sensations. This is the nature of culture and its importance as a limiting environment: it limits a man's possibilities by defining the alternatives which confront him in any given time, place and situation. But culture exists as a result of man's freedom--that is, even the limits imposed by culture are the result of man's primary need and ability to organize his world in a humanly meaningful way. The path to educational reform that emerges from this analysis focuses on the tension between individual spontaneity and freedom and cultural continuity. If an individual is to be free and each individual life is to have primacy within this environment, and within the process of enhancing and facilitaing life, then education must promote people to a productive confrontation with the limitations of their culture.

Conventional schooling has been built around the transmission of the culture as limiting environment almost to the exclusion of its liberating possibilities; it has been concerned to communicate the cultural heritage almost to the complete exclusion of the skills for amending it. At its best, it has encouraged the development of interest, initiative, and independence in tackling already clearly defined "problems" of culture and society--"problems" which invariably turn out to be matters of individual adjustment to society (crime, divorce, etc.) and to assume the continuity of the basic values, interests, and assumptions of the culture. This bias in conventional schooling reverses and points the way to significant reform: it must seek clarity of perception of the cultural tradition as a set of limits <u>in order to</u> transcend them.



People of all cultures pass on to their children a heritage of skills, values, beliefs and institutions which will enable both their culture and their children to survive, in the only ways at that time and place available to and known by the older generation. A commonly heard rationale for formal education in the United States asserts that if the knowledge we have so far accumulated is not formalized for and taught to youth, years potentially dedicated to progress will unnecessarily be spent in rediscovering all that was discovered in previous generations. If this propcsition is taken seriously in its fullest implications, then in the interest of freeing youth from the need to retrace the path of past fottsteps, education must not trap the future in the directions established by the past. Its duty is, rather, to encourage the use of past and present in critical reformulations of what paths and what directions best serve the interests of humanity. Its obligation is to prepare children not only and not so much to contribute to maintaining and increasing the strength and stability of existing institutions and their inherent values and purposes, but also and more so to critically reevaluate and reformulate present values, purpose, and institutions. Such a sense of obligation challenges us to increasing awareness of our own assumptions, and to expliciting the material of their manifestations (language, institutions,

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roles, etc.) to creatively reconfigure our world and ourselves. The challenge for each individual is to discover where he is and use that environment of knowledge, skills, dreams, and needs to reach the understandings and skills which are his own, which serve the unique and continually broadening circumstances of his experiences and feelings. What must be intended, then, is the possibility for qualitative change in the values and purposes which define the self--and the way and directions in which the organism interacts with the environment.

Grades, roles and programs presently define education as a posession; the haves teach their education to the have nots, who are graded in terms of how accurately they received the lesson. Often, the information and its transaction are believed to be neutral. The education I am concerned with is a qualitatively different addition to most schooling. It is for individual growth, for enabling people to actualize their own most positive directions. Non-biological growth is not a possession, but a possibility inherent in each individual. Personal growth is a process developed in and through the individual's critical, integrative and creative use of and attitude toward his cultural and physical environment. Growth education belongs to the interaction among students and teachers. It is an educational process which results in process: the opening of space in and through which each individual may grow from current self to future self.

The intent and the philosophical assumptions of conventional schooling are responsible for its almost totally programmed character. I have intended to argue that that intent is valid only partially or, perhaps more accurately, that it would become valid if its partiality can be overcome. It reflects and acts on only the limiting side of the duality of culture to the exclusion of the side of creativity and growth. But, in larger human context, the meaning and purpose of culture as limits is to be found in the paradoxical circumstance that limits make freedom possible.

II

Before discussing the procedural and structural aspects of growth-education it is important to consider further the range and type of acting and knowing toward which my value- and belief-assumptions predispose the educational process. The adequacy of a course structure and teaching techniques is contingent upon the educational philosophy the course embraces. A course inherently presents the vital components of the educational philosophy that underlies it: a positive and growth-productive way of living and knowing must humanize, integrate, and connect; its values and assumptions must promote diversity, creative productivity, and life-loving peaceful relations within the human community. The importance and value of reasoning and argument are determined, then, by what they do to the world, to an individual, and to the relationship between the two.

Discussion of an argument's incoherencies and dissonances, which conventionally determine its worth, benefits an argument by provoking a maturation process which may or may not include the discovery of new and contradictory formulations and/or eventuate in a divergent and new world-view. An argument is discredited when the world-view it poses is found to be unuseful, harmful, or otherwise intolerable to one's sense of the human cause and condition.

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I am not so much interested in providing a stemp-book collection of theories and ideas as in furnishing a toolshed. A tool is useful if it in some way helps each of us to continually come to terms with and re-evaluate our values and directions. In tooling descriptions and evaluations are in dynamic relationship and are not isolated steps. Tools, people and objects (environment, reality, etc.) have no purpose or meaning in isolation from one another. Every time one is activated they all converge and are interactively effected. An argument which claims descriptive neutrality is not neutral, but is rather dumb to the political and philosophical decisions implicit in its own naming of a perception as neutral. For example, the neutral description of cannibalism as equivalent, in its particular cultural and ecological environment, to vegetarianism, in its cultural setting, is not value-free. I would have to suggest, controlled by objectivity and provoked by subjectivity, that planting yams is in any case preferable to eating humans. Even though the yam eater might eat less, more people would, in the end, eat. I believe, in sum, that an issue, to be meaningfully dealt with must be diagnosed. Diagnosis implies standards and definitions of health, of health-potential and of cure. A diagnosis may be stated descriptively, but its author needs to recognize and be responsible for the diagnostic implication of description. For me, a conceptual framework's force and pertinency is not only the extent to which it, as a diagnostic tool, makes connections among particular people and their world, but also--and essentially--the implications and directions the diagnosis and the way in which it is reached have for the interrelationship among humanity and world.

A behavioral approach to education--as reflected, for example, in the works of B. F. Skinner--visualizes a certain set of connections between human circumstances and behavior which have implications for future life. I do not intend to argue these. I invite you into my structure. You are free to, and asked to, compare; take from me (and others) what you feel is good and is useful; to conclude, even, that Skinner's world is more desirable than mine, or that his position describes your notion of the human condition more accurately than mine. But, if you argue that I am less consistent or cogent than others, I must respond that my case rests on a set of beliefs and meanings with which I endow the world to make it more livable for me. And I would ask you to consider whether an incomplete argument may none-the-less hold some basic notions of the way people can and should live which may be preferable to a tighter, more rigorous thesis. If the price of intellectual and scientific rigor is the sacrifice of the possibility of conscious and deliberate choice of the future, the price is too high.

But, of course, any theory, to be useful, must at some point deal with human realities. The problem involves a presumption about "reality." Certainly people's behavior can be tabulated, but is that the totality or essence of human existence? The question cannot be divorced from philosophy and from politics. No matter how one decides, the decision defines what is knowable, and attainable. It carries with it a whole set of implications about the ways in which we can and must construct our world, and in particular

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our intellectual life--a query about the politics of culture which concerns the sorts of control, freedom, diversity, and power that are possible and necessary. C. Wright Mills clearly revealed the limitations of purely statistical research in his discussion of public opinion measurement:

> The idea of legitimation is one of the central conceptions of political science, particularly as the problems of this discipline bear on questions of opinion and ideology. The research on 'political opinion' is all the more curious in view of the suspicion that American electoral politics is a sort of politics without opinion--if one takes the word "opinion" seriously; a sort of voting without much political meaning of any psychological depth--if one takes the phrase "political meaning" seriously. But no such question . . . can be raised about such "political researches" as these. How could they be? They require an historical knowledge and a style of psychological reflection which is not duly accredited by abstracted empiricists . . .[3]

As Mills implies, this sort of political research serves to legitimate a type of political behavior in its lack of either philosophical or psychological depth. I would add that the "non-opinions" exposed by public opinion research are precisely the attitudes cultivated by conventionally programmed education. The tabulation and manipulation of facts on the basis of the claim that they are neutral or merely represent reality impedes our recognition that they and their tabulation and use have deep implications for our lives, for our being either subservient to or determinant in our own value system and intellectual processes. This is precisely the gap in conventionally programmed education.

By contrast, the essential dimension of growth-directed education is that it must orient people toward values and evaluation; it must breed an educational interaction that consists in discourse about conceptualizations of issues not only in terms of their internal cogency but their external ramifications for human existence. The key is praxis. Theories and ideas have meaning to the extent that they help a person "live, live well, and live better" and to the extent that they improve upon the value of human existence and establish, change, and/or clarify its direction and purpose. The theory must presume, but also test, some notion of what is "good for us." Such an argument is proven not in terms of how well it holds together in isolated intellectual debate, but in terms of the kind of world and life that can be found in and through it.

This is all germane to my philosophy of education and my structural propositions in that it forms the heart of what I consider to be the crucial import of teaching-learning. That is: to share, reflect upon, and critize ideas, concepts, values, structures, and principles of organization and analysis in the context of how they relate a person to self, other and world--to the connections they make and the ways in which they evaluate those connections. Educational purpose extends, furthermore, to extracting combining, discarding, reconfiguring, constructing, and reforming structures,

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visions, and life styles which have more to offer in terms of enlarging the scope of possible adventures in human experience and awareness.

Education always deals in socialization: it inevitably participates, for better or worse, in developing the student's cognitive and evaluative orientations, his perspectives and perceptions. What I have been proposing is a counter-socialization of new purpose and definition in the use of the human faculties.

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III

In the preceeding sections I have argued that the challenge for the individual is to discover where he is and to use that environment of knowledge, skills, dreams and needs to reach new needs, understandings and skills which are his own, which serve the unique and continually broadening circumstances of his experiences and feelings. It is necessary now to add an important dimension: the process of self-discovery must proceed in the context and with the additional purpose of discovering self as a member of humanity; of integrating not only one's world through oneself, but also oneself into the human community.

Socialization is the process of internalizing the assumption-filters and behavioral orientations accepted and expected by one's culture; of acquiring the cognitive processes, perceptions, values, and norms which enable one to adjust to and participate in one's culture, and which give the world order and meaning shared by and communicable to others. In working with high school students there are two major aspects of socialization to which growth-education must initially be directed. The first deals with internalized and instituted (assumed and accepted) values, beliefs and norms which define a person's concept of self and of relationship of self-interest to the world. The second problem deals with the set of beliefs, norms and expectations specific to classroom roles, behavior and attitudes. Both concerns--with the student's concept of himself as an individual and as a student--imply the planning of a learning environment and process which will hopefully break old and non-productive habits of perception and reaction.

A person is socialized to an identity and way of being in and belonging to the world long before he is able to reason.[9] Educationally, the task is understanding the culturally prescribed concept of self and other: evaluating their implications for growth-education, and determining the direction in which resocialization should take place. Identity is composed of both internalized and external expectations which define a usually unarticulated notion of "good and right humaness." That notion exists in the context of, and is further defined by, the power, potential, and limitations culturally assigned to human nature as it interacts with the world around it. The tradition of radical individualism in Western Civilization, and most particularly in the United States, has defined the successful individual as a self-sufficient and self-made man in a competitive atmosphere in which each individual must struggle for himself and his own. Life is viewed as a race in which, as Hobbes asserted, "we must suppose to have no other goal, no other garland, but being foremost; and in it . . . continuously to outgo the next before is felicity, and to forsake the course is to die."[10] In such an environment of values and pursuits, that which benefits a person's self-interest has little necessary relationship to the common interests of humanity. This is revealed in the belief that to motivate people to change or to empathy it is necessary to appeal

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to their "self-interest." Self-interest in this context means that the desired accommodation or expenditure must justify itself as a profitable investment in the race for social status. It assumes the inability of an individual to feel a part of, to feel responsible to and for, the problems of humanity outside of their material correlation to his own social position and well-being. As a result, injustice is seen and alleviated only in so far as it falls under the mantle of the master principle of an enlightened, self-interested social morality: "if it happened to him, it could happen to me."

So pervasive are these habits of thought that even historic alternatives are almost banished from cultural memory. Who recalls--who is reminded in conventional schooling--that other peoples at least since Solon, the ancient Greek law-giver, have believed that justice is possible precisely in proportion to men's capacity for compassion, their ability to feel an injury suffered by another as an injury already done to themselves? The deterioration in the meaning of self-interest revealed in this failure of collective memory and imagination is, as Eric Fromm has maintained, the major failing of modern culture.

Schooling, in its representation of the dominant value system, has long been aiding and abetting this failure. The education system's complicity is evidenced in the neutral curriculum (previously discussed) as well as in the classroom structuring of roles, authority and rewards, and the ways in which knowledge is given and pursued. The role of schooling in the socialization process is the training of the young to fit into our society by interiorizing the accepted behavioral and attitudinal norms and by adjusting to the lock-step process in which the student climbs in predetermined fashion towards a predetermined goal--social status and material success. Even where the system of schooling is not explicity propagandistic and manipulative in this regard, it tends to serve the same purposes by default--by its failure to pose alternatives which might afford self-respect and a sense of belonging.

Dewey explained accurately the present dilema:

> Each generation is inclined to educate its young so as to get along in the present world instead of with a view to the proper end of education: the promotion of the best possible realization of humanity as humanity.[11]

If self-interest (as we have come to know it through our visions of success and struggle to "get along in the world") does not promote the "best possible realization of humanity as humanity," then it is the responsibility of education to participate in the resocialization of people's attitude toward self and world. But <u>how</u> does one presume to know what the true interests of humanity as humanity are, and what best serves them? And <u>who</u> presumes to know what answers to those questions should be represented in education?

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It seems to me that education should not direct itself to the inculcation of particular values. If it did, education would become the possession of whoever was professing the value, rather than a process of growth. The student should be helped and encouraged to discover his own values, to consider available alternatives, to evaluate and reformulate.

But evaluate from what stand point and for what purpose? If the answer to that question is "the fullest possible realization of a materially successful and effectively socialized American devoid of self," then it is doubtful whether it is useful to create a situation in which the evaluation occurs. The process would, at any rate, have little import beyond the tactical. To ask a person to evaluate his values with his values, and nothing more, is to do nothing more than insist upon consistency. If, on the other hand, one responds: "evaluation is to be in the interest of the best possible realization of humanity as humanity," then it is essential that there be a set of reference points necessary to proper evaluation. Though the distinction between a frame of reference and values is subtle, it is essential to an educational process which hopes to promote the liberation of individuality and human potential, and the interrelatedness of humanity. It is necessary to establish as points of reference such tenets as: "for a human being to suffer unjustly is intolerable." Such an assertion is, of course, value-laden, but it is not in itself a value. It is, in effect, an assertion that values are called for; that criteria are necessary for judging, in particular circumstances, whether suffering is unjust. Such a reference point is not, however, a tautology--although in a more decent society it might appear to be. But in contemporary society, as it now is, the adoption of this particular reference point would have a genuinely revolutionary impact on education, for what it asserts is the human obligation to make moral judgements from the standpoint of humanity. As a frame of reference, this does not specify the values to be applied as criteria in judging human suffering; it simply enjoins us to develop such values. It simply warns us, as someone has put it, that "to communicate is to commiserate." I say "simply," yet no more subversive injunction could be addressed to a society in which the meaning of self-interest has deteriorated so far as it has in ours.

Perhaps the most fundamental reference point in the evaluation of present life in terms of "humanity as humanity" is a sense of self and relationship to the human community which enables and, in fact, requires one to see one's self in "the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human."[12] Each person's interrelatedness with humanity must rest on a love of life. Life-love is expressed in self-interest by a need to realize the ascendancy of persuasion by love and reason over coercion by aggression, dominance, or manipulation; it leads to a preference for creativity and for discovering the new rather than conforming to the old. Such self-interest would recognize and respond to alleviate injustice not in so far as "if it happened to him it might happen to me," but in so far as "if it happened to him it has already happened to me." As a frame of reference self-interest does not define the occurence of injustice

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but gives any definition an essential basis in love of self as a member of and participant in human destiny rather than love of one's success as defined by established roles which alienate one from humanity by pitting one's interests against the interests of others. The reference point I describe is one of authenticity.

> Modern man's sense of himself was [and is] entirely relative, a function of his momentary success or failure in competition for property and power against his fellowmen. His body, his mind, his soul, all his faculties and capacities, appeared as nothing but competitive assets, to be invested prudently for a maximum return; he was forced constantly to develop and perfect himself, yet unable, even for a moment, to call himself his own.[13]

Resocializing toward an authentic notion of self can only be rooted in the experiencing of self as a unique manifestation of all humanity. From such authenticity "the love of man, derived from love of oneself, is the basic principle of human justice."[14] To be genuine, love must be emotional and spontaneous, revealing in itself and for itself a concern which responds immediately and emotionally to all that it encounters. Reason is motivated by this love. It stems from the need life-love invokes to try to insure creation rather than destruction: to develop, in understanding, an alternative to coercion and aggression in human relations. This implies that reason, to be rooted in life-love, must be rooted in compassion. Compassion is the means by which reason and creativity, and the love of life which mandates them, are invoked and involved in everyday human activity. In essence, compassion enables reason to lead us to a knowledge of what is good; conscience--a sense of responsibility to oneself and one's love of life--requires that each person be committed to his reasoned opinions and feelings. Reason, in this context, has the ability to humanize our actions, for, as Freire tells us, "action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is when it is not dichotomized from reflection."[15]

But authenticity also requires the creation of an interelatedness among men and their world which is productive of individuality and diversity. Individuality is at the core of reason. The collective act of reasoning in the company of one's fellows should not suppress the individuality of each reasoner. In order to reason a person must assert his individual mental and moral self over and against the consensus and/or pressure of external power, be it societal or impersonal. Reason demands that the individual doubt what is assumed and accepted; that, in Dewey' phrase, the "givens" be recognized as "takens." Doubt and reason have no other ultimate or more important function than "to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one."[16] For a person to participate in such an activity, he must not forge the contribution of what is uniquely his, or his right to be a creative member on his own terms. This is the essential meaning of Dewey's warning:

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> A society based on custom will utilize individual variations only up to a limit of conformity with usage; uniformity is the chief ideal within each class.
>
> A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds them necessary to its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its educational measures.16B

Educating for personal growth and the development of the interrelatedness of that growth with the growth of humanity will inevitably fail whenever it does not include as its most vital and most fertile human capacity, the ability to care and, moreover, to do so from and with compassion. "Extend self-love to others and it is transformed into virtue, a virtue that has its roots in the heart of every one of us."17 The separation of emotions from life and especially from intellect is connected with the problem of redefining self-interest. Self-interest, as I would have it conceived, both relies on and expresses itself through love of life, through love of one's own life both emanating from and extending to love of all life.

The problem of the reformulation of self-interest requires to be dealt with on several fronts at the same time. Socialization to the school structure itself is an immediate problem because of the way in which student-teacher roles and curriculum promote what self-interest currently connotes for us, and because of the way in which established patterns of interaction and reward affect learning habits and dispositions. The combination of competition, external rewards, and a pre-established curriculum (generally with "right answers") presumes that the values and goals represented by success in a school which directs youths' potential towards achieving a good social position are both valid and definitive. It claims that society must be organized around and in consequence must court a self-interest built upon competition against the rest of humanity for one's own advancement. It therefore effectively coerces educational effort into a position of supporting a specific social/cultural order and restricting areas of creativity, individuality, and controversy to those which enhance and are uniform with rather than criticize or deviate from the values and pursuits sanctioned by that order. As such it cannot promote the best realization of humanity as humanity, nor can it contribute to the diversification of real possibilities for human experience, knowledge and direction.

Schooling is alienating to most students. They have no meaningful control over or responsibility for the goal of an education which is predetermined as "preparation for later life." No questions are to be asked about what either later or present life might look like--what other forms than those now presented might be more desirable ones for which to prepare. As such, schooling denies the student as a whole individual, separating the immediacy of his experiences, emotions, and desires from the place and way in which he spends the majority of his time. It demands that he perfect

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himself, but does not allow him, even for a moment, to call himself his own.

The threat of grades, dishonor, and/or embarrassment at mistakes aggravates the alienation of authentic self. It minimizes a student's willingness to experiment, explore or involve himself in any way which might express or provoke his own sense of excitement. The student is often quite sincere in his struggle to survive with some respect intact. His self-alienation is far more radical than pervasive insincerity. It is, as Berman elucidates.

> a far more profound form of self-alienation which I will call inauthenticity: the determination of men to hide themselves not merely from others, but from themselves. Insincerity, whether rooted in self-love or self-hatred, requires that a self be "there" to state the deception; inauthenticity is a situation from which the self has altogether disappeared.[18]

The student, as a creative or stimulated learner (an authentic learner), by the time he reaches high school, is usually de-moral-ized into a self-rejective mimicry of what he believes external authority wants of him,-- and what, generally, he has come to believe are his own indigenous and independent needs and directions. This is partially due to the schools' tendency to make self-esteem and security depend upon external approval, grades, and a competitive "proving one's self." This socialized dependency of one's sense of belonging on how well one fulfills prescribed roles and performance expectations makes excellence synonomous with status. That link must be broken if we are interested in enlarging the degree of freedom to experiment and play with ideas. The atmosphere of the classroom must disengage mistakes, criticism, and evaluation from competition, esteem and condemnation. The willingness to risk errors, to learn from others' contributions to one's critical awareness of errors, and to learn from their evaluation of the direction and meaning of one's projects is crucial to education and to the processes of reasoning. However, the risk of error is today the same as the risk of one's esteem.

> Every act of conscious learning requires the willingness to suffer injury to one's self-esteem. That is why young children, before they are aware of their own self-importance, learn so easily; and why older persons, especially if vain or important, cannot learn at all.[19]

To learn is to expose oneself, to make oneself vulnerable; only a masochist would willingly undertake the risk in the company of what Riesman calls "antagonistic cooperators." Security, self-esteem and belonging must begin to emanate from an individual's sense of his unique contributory importance and competence in both independent and collective pursuits. His unique importance must stem from his ability and willingness to learn, to participate with sincerity and authenticity in a give and

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take which sees criticism as both considerate and consideration. That each contribution is allowed to actualize the full uniqueness of the individual is essential.

> Men are born equal but they are also born different. The basis of this difference is the inherited equipment, physiological and mental, with which they start life, to which is added the particular constellation of circumstances and experiences that they meet with. ...The genuine growth of the self is always a growth on this particular basis; it is an organic growth, the unfolding of a nucleus that is pecular for this one person and only for him.[20]

Redefinition of the purpose and context of intellectual exercise is basic to achieving a new sense of belonging. One's role (whether teacher or student) must involve one as a unique individual in common effort with one's fellows in the struggle to actualize oneself as fully and humanely as possible. Intellectual exercise cannot be valued as a means of proving oneself or attaining for oneself over and above others. It cannot relate an individual competitively or abusively to others.

> The uniqueness of the self in no way contradicts the principle of equality. The thesis that men are born equal implies that they all share the same fundamental human qualities, that they share the basic fate of human beings, that they all have the same inalienable claim on freedom and happiness. It furthermore means that their relationship is one of solidarity, not one of domination-submission.[21]

The difficulties presented are numerous. Here again, an important step in actualizing student-as-whole-and-healthily-growing-human is to invite emotion into the classroom. Emotional involvement with and in thinking will (and should) tend to produce exaggerations. Most teachers, especially when they perceive themselves as in the business of informing, deplore exaggeration as teratoid truth. However, it should be remembered that the act and art of thinking is itself an exaggeration: the isolation of one idea or set of ideas which lends it, at least temporarily, more importance than all other ideas. Secondly, the problem of self-esteem, of working toward the establishment of cooperative effort in which each participant is equally, uniquely, and non-competitively valued, can be partially resolved by a new system of material imput. Each student as a member of the culture has a wealth of experiential resources which should and could be tapped in the form of short autobiographies which capture the individual in a situation, role interaction, institutional setting, etc. The autobiography need not be limited to actual life history, but might also take shape through a postulated circumstance, or a predicted or desired condition. Neither must the medium of communication always be writing. Observations and interviews are other means by which each student can explore his world for pertinent data. Commentaries on class readings and group projects are of course important contributions. If, within each section of study, a student is given the freedom to choose his own contributive format and if the subject of each student's contribution is

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different, much of the grounds for comparison will be removed. (Grading, central to the problem of competition, is discussed in Section VI.)

IV

To summarize the analysis so far: the distinction between my educational assumptions and conventional assumptions is explained in the way in which each channels the experience and interpretation of the world outside one's self through the structure it presents. Conventionally, the internal experience of external reality and translation of that experience into communicative meaning-interpretations is reproductive of the assumed meanings and values which legitimate and maintain the world-as-is. Within this framework the value structure of the culture is stagnant. People's awareness of how they are connected to the institutions, roles and norms of interaction; of how those connections limit their humanity; and of alternatives which provide a better, more próductive peaceful and humane way of being in the world, does not contribute to change. Innovation and creative resources are used to adjust, maintain, strengthen, enlarge, and perfect both institutions and social relations in terms of an unquestioned set of values and purposes. Those values, in turn, legitimate and maintain the desirability of and help us cope with our institutions and social relations. The values, beliefs, and norms of a culture act as a filter in the process of change both by labeling certain innovations as progress and by limiting what is and can be accepted as good, useful, and practical. Changes in social structure, institutions and the use of technology which result from a change in notions of what is appropriate to human ends and means and belief systems' in what is the "good life" and how it can and should be attained, are excluded from the ordinary domain of human ingenuity and progress.

Because the culturally prescribed filters are usually given as accurate perceptions of reality, or as definitive of reality itself, and because they structure the cognitive development of the culture's members and are inherent in their language, it is often hard for those brought up within a culture even to recognize the biases and limitations established by their culture.

Among those fundamental preconceptions so basic in our own society as to be taken for granted is the proposition that the quest for excellence is virtually synonymous with the struggle for superiority in comparison with others. This link between competive inequality and achievement seems to me both unnecessary and misleading. There are two aspects of competition which distinguish different qualities of competitive effort. One involves what one is competing for, the other, what one is "against." It is possible for a person to be involved in a competion which pits the limits of past and present accomplishments against the possibility and potentiality of greater accomplishment. This activity is very different from that enlisted by schools where grading has the effect of comparing a

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student to his peers and insists that he at least equal their performance if he is to save face, much less enter college. Competitive effort which occurs within a game in which its intent and reward is the game played as well as possible must also be distinguished from school competition in which the effort is directed at a reward external to the process of using one's mind.

The assertion that achievement will occur only under the pressure of competition for external reward (the esteem of peer, authorities, admission into the next highest rank, or grades) or of competition against others denies the possibility of effort motivated by a love of and concern for life. It ties directly into the need for resocialization of self-interest. The question of motivation is, thus, answered, and replaced by the involvement of the emotions and concerns through which the student might learn the joy of learning. In the competitive or externally rewarded effort, motivation is directed at the joy of winning or succeeding. The joy of learning can be learned because humans are self-conscious animals for whom the activity of caring naturally demands the activity of understanding.

I do not intend to imply that emotions spring pure from life-love, untouched by a person's previous socialization. Emotions need educating. Indeed, without educating them one fails to educate the whole person, to resocialize whole integrated individuals. Just as the emotions have been miseducated through the teaching of destructive competition, they are to be reeducated through the teaching of the arts of compassion and reason.* Compassioned reason demands a structure for thinking about the world which will develop the interconnectedness of the cultural and physical world and will enable the thinker to orient and discover himself within that schema as a member of the human community. It must enable him to enlarge his perceptions and perspectives and to translate his experiences and needs into his humanity.

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* One professor suggested that it would be possible to compete for "most compassionate." His warning is worthy of attention if only because it reminds us that true compassion ceases when it is exercised as a means of competition and selfishness rather than as the heart of brotherhood. His warning also reminds us that compassion must be exercised within the classroom. The crucial testing ground of compassion is not situations alien to oneself but immediate to oneself. If one cannot feel compassion for the fat kid, for the boy who smokes while others are playing ball, or for the stuttering teacher then one is not compassionate.

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V

The possibility of confronting the limitations, biases and accepted practices of a culture depends upon a belief in a potentially open intellectual and human future, and on one's need to participate in fulfilling that potential. If education is responsible to the proposition that "that which is falls short of that which can be,"[22] its analytic structure must direct the student towards the process of "unveiling the world" (Freire). There are four main aspects to this "unveiling":

First, the structure must organize the world in such a way as to give direction and clarity to the student's discovery of the values implicit in his culture, and of social organization and expectations. To accomplish this task I suggest the use of certain culture "themes."

One possible organizational outline using culture themes as an analytical structure might begin with a study of language. The importance of this section is in part explained at the beginning of this paper (Section I). Starting with a study of the politics of language will hopefully initiate a crucial awareness of the implications of word usage as keys to value-assumptions throughout the course. Section two of the outline would center around a study of values, beliefs, expectations and stereotypes. All of these pervade a person's language and their study follows closely and naturally the study of the politics of language. Following this section would be a study of institutions, roles and rituals. The fourth section would involve authority, power, and violence as aspects of social organization, conceived and maintained through all three of the above themes. Finally, the course would be concerned with the individual in culture. This section would study individuals against patterns and conformity; desires, and deviancy; dreams, and realities, and inventions and fictions. As the last part of the course the students would be given a "thematic crisis" (explained below) in which to ply the themes.[22B]

Second, the course must provide a structural basis for discerning the dynamic relationships among culture themes and the implications they have for living in that culture. One of the major functions of structured reason is to enable us, upon reflecting on our past and proposed actions, to determine and predict their ramifications for and connections with the environment in which they are committed. Thus we are better able to determine what is good, and how to achieve that good. I suggest the device of a crisis situation to engage the student in using his knowledge of the thematic content of his culture. Through analysis of a particular crisis it is possible to disclose how the available alternatives are determined by the total thematic situation, and to reveal the implications that the crisis resolution (or failure at resolution) has had for future life. Some examples of works (appropriate for high school readers) which present such a situation are Richard Revere on McCarthyism; Hayden, The Algier Hotel Incident; Studs Terkel, Hard Times, an Oral History of the Great Depression, or fictional works like A Canticle for Liebowitz and The President's Analyst. An example of a more historical problem is the Salem Witch trials, using, perhaps, Samuel Sewall's diary .

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The third purpose of unveiling the world consists in enabling the student to realize a concern for humanity as humanity, to understand his culture as it reflects on and is involved in human community. The resocialization of self-interest, discussed earlier, is the essence of this third purpose. Reformulation of the self-concept may be approached in the classroom through types of activities and materials which evoke an emotional response and which compel a student to see the world as another does and to work with that vision as if he were in that person's position. These would include acting out the parts in plays like Raisin in the Sun and Death of a Salesman; reading autobiographical works like Manchild in the Promised Land; and playing simulation games like "Ghetto," which requires the student to take on the identity and circumstances of a young Black mother, menial laborer, street hustler, etc. The objective is for the student to put himself in another's position, relating the knowledge derived of his own circumstances (understood through critical consideration of student autobiographies, observations, interviews, and commentaries on class work) to the perspective and problems of another person, and vice versa. It also develops a structure for the fourth intent in unveiling the world: it constructs a fulcrum between the individual and his immediate problems and circumstances, on the one hand, and his society and culture and the broader issues and circumstances for human life therein, on the other.*

Most importantly, for the fulfillment of humanity as humanity, the course must deal with such instances of oppression as colonialism and racism, the most flagrant injustices and inauthentic representations of self. It must reveal--cognitively and emotionally at the same time--how one people's judgement of another peoples' relative human worth works to destroy both peoples' humanity. If one can imagine a repressive society in which the master's contempt for his servant was compatible with the servant's love, loyalty, and deference to the master, one can imagine a "happy despotism." But even in such a state the relationships could afford no real satisfaction or joy because people would not be seen "as they are, but as they are forced to be."[23] Such human relationships cannot possibly serve humanity as they deny a genuine self, replacing it with a role-player whose worth is dependent upon his status as ascribed by domination-submission. But no one can give back another's humanity; he can only reclaim his own and in the process cease to defile others.

So, in a sense, the focus of the course must teeter-totter on its fulcrum, between the individual's relationship to his culture, and the relationship of that relationship and of his culture to humanity and to the position and problems of other individuals. The questions which might help to advance this dialectic in the classroom would include these:

*Here again there is a question of direction in curriculum design. Does one begin with the student and his situation, next consider the problems and crises of fellow students, and then move to larger and more alien crises, or is it best to move in the opposite direction?

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> What principles concerning the conduct of life do people adopt as a result of their constant exposure to the symbols exploited in advertising? What do they conclude from their experience of how prejudices are mobilized in politics? ...What expectations do they form from the physical signs of wealth and poverty embodied in our buildings, means of transport, and fashions? What practices do they countenance after growing accustomed to the conventions that lead to advancement?[24]

What social and cultural conditions are necessary to prepare a person to fight in a war, or to condone the fighting of a war? What possible leverages are available in our culture to obtain a peaceful coexistence with our fellow men? In our systemization of roles, when, how and where is the individual a means to an end, and when an end in himself? What type of roles and role interactions most favor the individual and humanity as a whole? What is the meaning of authority? How does it affect our lives? How does it affect different people's lives differently? What governs its effects?

No structuring of the world can be complete, perfect or unbiased--unless one believes in a closed intellectual and human future, or that the way one organizes the world has nothing to do with the way one lives in it. It is important to include the student in the structuring of his temporary world (the course) so that he might better understand not only its particular principles of organization but also the way in which any formula for organization is developed. As Paul Goodman has said,

> The salient virtue that most teachers have always hoped for in letting the student discover for himself, namely the development of his confidence that he can, that he is adequate to the nature of things, can proceed on his own initiative, and ultimately strike out on an unknown path where there is no program and assign his own tasks to himself.[25]

One way of facilitating the student's understanding of the categories of thematic structure, of their overlap and connectedness, is to involve the entire class in the process of deciding what resources should be studied under each theme. Thus the class is given a structure which, by including students as active and imaginative initiator, allows them to recreate the structure through the exercise and practice of their own faculties. Because, as Freire states, "dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world,"[26] dialogue is the most appropriate process for connecting materials to categories of study.

The course intentionally avoids theoretical social science materials and generates structure through the organization of course work rather than the study of theory books. What I have tried to do is begin a process of attempting to develop a course which will develop the intuitive and emotional maturity which is necessary to becoming a successful

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investigator of human affairs. Bruner illustrates this process for the natural sciences in his book Processes of Education. Before a person can fully grasp the formalization of physical properties, he must have an intuitive sense of such things as their reversibility. I have tried to give students what I believe to be and have defined in this paper as the human and social properties and points of reference which must be intuited and formulated by the student before theory can be more than superficial, before it can take on meaning and purpose for human life, from which it finds its material and in whose service its study is necessarily committed. They are properties which are largely contradicted (as I have shown) by the way we live today. As a result, there is, I believe, an urgent need at all levels to begin a process of resocialization which must begin with fundamentals. A student entering this class may have no theoretical or formalized knowledge of what an ideology is, and he may leave it without this knowledge. What I hope he will have gained is a sense of the meaning and cultural circumstance of the "stuff" which is in each of us and which makes up a theory of ideology; a knowledge that will enable him, when he comes across a theoretical definition of ideology, to have the fundamentals of compassioned reasoning and a sense of himself in relationship to the world and to others, which will direct the use of his theoretical knowledge towards the fulfillment of humanity as humanity.

VI

I have saved a more thorough discussion of grading for a seperate section at the end because it is an issue which raises the implicit incompatibility of this course with convential education. The inherent conflict between the course's goals and processes and the nature of grading is perhaps irresolvable. One professor suggested to me that a grade could be given as a crisis situation. Student groups could be asked to "grade" some acts in terms of their practicality. Businessmen might be requested to "grade" assignments, or janitors asked to "rank" students. Such grades and rankings would then serve as cultural data, the students examining them for their role-specific logic, seeing each manner of grading as conditioned and socializing.

However, the exploitation of the evils of conventional schooling for their educational possibilities is limited in its ability to overcome the conflict between the structures and practices of schooling, and the purposes of this course. Yet, I hope that the pedagogical frustrations and problems engendered by teaching this course in a conventional school will not devalue the attempt, however thwarted by the school, to provide the type of education implicit in the course.

Grading is, by nature, a competitive process: an "A" is better than a "B" which is better than a "C" and so on. It would be no easy nor reasonable chore to convince a student that within the context of the course and the grading situation, an "A" grade did not signify an "A" person, and

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an "F" an "F" person, for indeed that is just what it implies. Grading in some sense seems entirely to attribute progress--both social and individual--to the knowledge of those in front that the rear ranks are pressing in upon them and to the knowledge of those behind that they must catch up with those ahead, which of course necessitates the process of ranking in order of value. And if an "A" were not really significant of a higher ranking than any lower grade, what would be the purpose of assigning it in the first place? Would not a student learn more about criteria of excellence, about his peculiar configuration of proficiencies and deficiencies through an evaluation which specifically addressed itself to such matters and to which he had the opportunity to respond? Indeed, does not grading provide teachers with an opportunity to avoid evaluation? If grading were eliminated, would not teachers and students both be freed to evaluate?

Educational potential will always be impaired as long as people are graded. Not only does it injure the growth of a healthy and authentic sense of self, but it also degrades the idea of excellence. "For excellence simply describes the standards which define all our aspirations in the development of our talents, while superiority is a judgment of the relative worth of human beings."[27] As long as a person must submit his human worth to the judgment of other human beings, as long as he must struggle against his human inferiority and others' superiority, or denigrate the worth of others to obtain his superiority, he cannot claim his self as his own. Instead he lives not in himself but outside of himself, in a comparison with others, and is in a most fundamental sense, which the doctrine of individualism would disguise, completely and irrevocably dependent upon others--upon his inequality with them--for his sense of self, be it negative or positive. "Equality resents superiority; it only resents excellence when men have been induced to test their own worth in a contest in which superiority rather than excellence is the objective."

My opposition to grading is more than philosophical. Grading is immediately and irredeemably involved in establishing and maintaining a competition destructive of every individual's humanity and ability to learn. Its complete incompatibility with the endeavors and aims of this course prevent me from suggesting ways in which its use might be improved. There are, however, a group of intellectual skills with which this course is centrally concerned and at which any form of evaluation must be directed. These skills form a "model of excellence." They are very much like the points of reference which I discussed earlier. Both not only guide growth, but in fact make growth possible. If growth depends upon the use of reasoned compassion in human affairs, and if the improvement of our faculties for both love and thought depend upon our willingness to evaluate and criticize, then we have need of some model of excellence toward which to strive. And it is important that we use our standards of excellence to evaluate where we now stand and how best to move from that point. As in medicine, there can be no cure without diagnosis. But just as the doctor must first understand his patient's present condition in order to move

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toward greater health and to evaluate the patient's progress, the teacher must consider each student in terms of his own particular point of departure. He must recognize where each student lives, intellectually and emotionally, and use that knowledge as a visible point of departure for growth, and for the evaluation of growth-progress toward the model of excellence.

Not all models of excellence contribute to, or can claim to be standards of excellent growth. Certainly a model must include as central and primary the actualization of compassion and reason. There are a number of skills which, throughout this paper, are viewed as essential to compassion and reason, and to their use in discovering ways of "living, living well and living better." The first on that list is the ability of a student to place himself in another's position; to identify himself with and to understand a perspective and problem previously alien to him. He must be able to decipher the value-assumptions and the implications for attitude and behavior in the way language is used to describe a situation. He must, in essence, develop a larger framework of perspectives which able him to discover the "givens" as the "takens." It is of further importance that the student be able to make connections among the "takens," the institutions, role interactions and physical environment. He should be engaged in a process of orienting and discovering himself within and relating his immediate circumstances to progressively larger and more complex schemes of cultural and social organization. The fourth skill consists in the inability to determine and predict an action's ramifications for and connections with the environment in which it is committed. Finally, the student should begin to develop the ability to evaluate moral judgments from the stand point of humanity--to formulate and argue his own values and concepts in terms of their potential for humanizing his culture and society.

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Footnotes

[1]McLuhan, The Medium Is the Message.

[2]Specific reference to these tests can be found in almost any educational psychology text book, or located in the educational index under headings refering to student achievement and teacher attitude.

[3]Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," To Free a Generation, by David Cooper.

[4]R. D. Laing, "The Obvious," To Free a Generation, by David Cooper.

[5]Rosten, "The Joys of Yiddish," University of Chicago Alumni Bulletin.

[6]Fromm, Escape from Freedom, pp. 263-264.

[7]Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 39.

[8]Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p. 52.

[9]For a discussion of early childhood socialization see: Church, Language and the Discovery of Reality, and Berger and Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality.

[10]Hobbes, The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic, p. 1, Chap. 9, Para. 21.

[11]Dewey, Education and Democracy, p. iii.

[12]Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 52.

[13]Berman, The Politics of Authenticity, p. 313.

[14]Ibid., p. 181.

[15]Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 38.

[16]Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man.

[16B]Dewey, Education and Democracy, p. 357

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[17]Berman, The Politics of Authenticity, p.181

[18]Ibid., p. 60

[19]Szaz, Thomas, "The Second Sin," Harper's, March 1973, p. 68-69.

[20]Fromm, Escape from Freedom, p. 290.

[21]Fromm, Escape from Freedom, p. 291.

[22]Paraphrased from a citation in Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man, p. 209.

[22B]One obvious pedagogical alternative to this outline reverses the order of presentation. If this were done the student would begin with a crisis situation which he would then digest and analyze thematically. The analysis would move toward the most visible and tangible themes first. Study would begin with "me and other" (section five of the outline), then deal with "them others" (authority), thirdly with "it others" (institutions), then deal with the patterned abstractions of values and beliefs, and finally consider the expression and transmition of these in the meta-system of language.

[23]Berman, The Politics of Authenticity, p. 15 ff.

[24]McClintok, "Universal Voluntary Study," Center Magazine.

[25]Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, p. 86.

[26]Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

[27]Livingston, "Tenure Everyone?" p. 63.

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